

Grandfather's Wish



Chapter Four by Kay Hively

The big bird floated silently over the meadow. Miguel saw its shadow pass over him and his father. As Miguel watched and worried, another bird arrived from beyond one of the hills. Jumping to his feet, Miguel pointed to the sky and called for his father to get his gun.

Hector and Gogo were both on full alert.

Senor Sanchez rose to his feet, laid his hand on Miguel's shoulder, and told him not to worry about the Thunderbird. It is a giant bird, he said, but it is no danger to the sheep – not even to the little lambs. The great bird does not attack live animals, Senor Sanchez explained. He said that nature had made this bird giant in size, but weak in other ways. Its legs and talons are too weak to carry anything. The great Thunderbird feeds only on animals that it finds dead in the meadows and on the dessert.

Miguel felt better. He had heard about the great Thunderbird. He had seen its picture on rugs and pottery in the village. The Thunderbird was admired by many Indian people.

After a few minutes of circling over the little meadow, the two birds drifted off to the south. Hector and Gogo – and Miguel – relaxed once again.

The day had gotten warm so Miguel and his father walked to the stream for a drink. The cool mountain water was refreshing. Miguel could see fish in the stream. He decided to try catching one. His father cut a branch from a bush and sharpened it into a spear.

Miguel laid his poncho on the bank and waded into the shallow water. He stood very still, waiting for a fish. It

seemed like a long time, but finally a fish moved toward him. With his spear poised and ready to strike, Miguel held his breath. Then with a mighty thrust, the shepherd boy hurled his spear.



With a waggle of its tail, the fish turned and fled while the spear fell harmlessly in the stream.

Miguel retrieved his spear and set himself once again. But after eight or nine attempts, he gave up and tossed his spear into the bush.

Miguel decided that he was a shepherd, not a fisherman.

He picked up his poncho and returned to the rock. Senor Sanchez was standing up and looking across the little valley. Some of the sheep had strayed to the far side of the meadow. Miguel's father whistled for Gogo to round them up.

Like a bullet out of a gun, Gogo raced to the back of the meadow and began herding the wandering sheep. Miguel watched as the dog bunched them together and brought them back to the center of the flock.

As he was admiring Gogo's work, Miguel heard Hector barking. The shepherd boy and his father looked to see what had disturbed Hector. Miguel could see the problem. In the middle of the stream was a lamb, up to its belly in water. Its mother stood helplessly on the bank, calling to her baby.

Classroom Extensions Things to Think About and Do -

- A. What is pottery? Visit a potter's shop or invite a potter to visit your classroom.
- B. Find out what kinds of fish live in cold-water streams. What kind of fish do you think Miguel tried to spear?

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Next Week: Chapter Five - Miguel to the Rescue